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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A NEW THEORY OF GERMAN TURPITUDE

SIR,—When the Great War began, the American people were stunned. Not one in a hundred had given enough study to the current history of the world, and still less to the deep psychic forces that were silently sweeping us on to the brink of the apparently bottomless pit that is now staring us in the face. And now after nearly three years of study, and after whole libraries of writings by our scientists, philosophers, book-makers and statesmen upon the problem, after a hundred possible causes, big and little, have been ventilated, no solution of the problem as to the main cause has yet reached the popular mind.

It is my purpose to submit a certain chain of facts and events in the history of human evolution which to my mind have succeeded each other with the certainty of fate, from the processing of certain fatal errors in the ideals of the human race, down to this great whirlpool of destruction; and to endeavor from that to draw the lesson of its teaching.

It is agreed by those philosophers who have studied most intelligently the conscious forces which govern human evolution, that harmony is the test of ethics; that the normal human being will not deal selfishly nor injuriously with his fellows; that he will always desire to live peacefully in enjoyable and harmonious relations with all humanity, and that the laws which govern the impulses of the individual will also govern the impulses of communities and nations. They also agree that the impulse for forceful and aggressive expression, which is illustrated by every growing and dominating race or nation, is not abnormal and reprehensible, as pleaded by all of the non-resistant and pacifist cults; nor, on the other hand, that it justifies war and conflict between either individuals or nations: but that it is intended by Nature to be expended in carrying out the great purpose of the human race—the completion of the evolution of the earth's surface, to which all of the lower orders of animal life have contributed.

There is no escape from the charge that the immediate psychic cause for the war is the theory which has been cultivated and preached by all of the accepted leaders of thought in Germany for the last generation: that, since their *kultur* was superior to any other, it was not only their right but their duty to enforce it upon the whole world; that no mere consideration of humanity should be allowed to interfere with their national ambitions, and that war was a part of Nature's plan, and therefore good in itself.

Now, where did the German people get this idea (which even the Kaiser himself must now begin to doubt)? If we go back two thousand years to the condition of society that prevailed among those races in which

our Christian philosophy originated, and keep in mind the fact that humanity makes most of its progress through a blundering series of reactions from one error to another, we find that the keynote of the religion of the Jews—and of all of the Semitic peoples—was that the most divine element of man was the power to reproduce himself; and so their worship, their philosophy, and even their religious architecture centered about those parts of the human organism which were employed in the process of reproduction. The corrupt priesthood of the Jews had carried this Phallic worship—so called—to such abnormal and repulsive extremes that a natural reaction took place under the name of “Christianity.” This went to the opposite extreme and evolved the theory that the generative elements, and the impulses connected therewith, instead of being stimulated and worshiped should be degraded, suppressed, strangled, and regarded with shame and contempt. This idea was the source of the most positive teachings of the Catholic Church, from its beginning to the present day, that all gender relations were inherently sinful; that progeny could only be cleansed from sin by special services of the Church; and that no man or woman who lived in marriage relationship could be fit for holy rank, or should have any share in the higher honors of the Church.

When the Church became powerful enough to monopolize all knowledge of letters and sciences, and thereby to control the minds of all rulers of nations and of armies, they evolved and enforced the doctrine that all peoples and persons who were outside the pale of the Church—being sinful and without redemption—must be in a natural state of enmity to God, and could claim no rights, even to life itself, at the hands of the Defenders of the Faith. Out of such teaching it was inevitable that injustice, oppression, and war should become the normal state of society wherever the influence and power of the Church extended.

With this, it was also inevitable that among the Christian people generally the idea of sex shame should become responsible for the great Pandora box of evils that have filled the Christian world with immorality, vice, disease, degeneracy, race suicide, cruelty and war.

Nor did the great Reformation, led by Luther, and made the basis of the Lutheran cult of Germany, modify but slightly these fatal errors of the older Church. The notoriously low estimation of women by German men, and their unequaled tendency to immoral crimes, are a natural adjunct to their brutal attitude toward life as shown by their methods in warfare, both to their own citizens and to their enemies.

If the foregoing is true—and I challenge dispute—the Christian world has not only to destroy the power of Germany to ever again curse the world with its false and vicious errors of ideals and purposes, by depriving it of all power to wage war, but to purify itself by correcting its whole system of social and religious teachings by making respect for the Divinity of human life, instead of shame, the keynote of its philosophy.

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[It is indisputable that Teutonic turpitude is a unique phenomenon; yet our correspondent's theory that its roots are to be discovered in a distorted view of sexual ethics strikes us as quaint rather than persuasive. —EDITOR.]